

## GETTING A VISA AT THE AMERICAN CONSULATE IN TIJUANA MEXICO

# WARNING

The following document provides detailed instructions on how to get your visa renewed at the US consulate in Tijuana, Mexico, based on experiences by a fellow Foreign National at Sandia National Laboratories. However, if you decide to explore this option, keep the following in mind:

- There is no guarantee that the US consulate still renews VISA this way. (Their regulations are “subject to change at any time without prior notice”.)
- You may get a short term VISA (just a few months). While this may be sufficient for most purposes, it can lead to problems if the immigration officer upon your return to the USA sets your I94 expiration date (mistakenly) to the date on your VISA instead of setting it to “Duration of Status”.
- If you do not get your VISA back the same day, then you may need to have to spend the night in Tijuana; so be prepared.
- If you do not get your VISA renewed at all (for whatever reason), then you will need to fly back to your home country. (You won’t be allowed to go back to the USA if your VISA is expired and you won’t be able to stay in Mexico).

Good luck!

## GETTING A VISA AT THE AMERICAN CONSULATE IN TIJUANA MEXICO

My name is Blanca Lapizco-Encinas, I am a Mexican National and I renewed my J1 visa at the American consulate in Tijuana Mexico on November 24, 2003.

### **What I saw there:**

I saw there that the American Consulate at Tijuana Mexico is still giving visas to third country nationals (foreigners other than Mexicans). I saw people from India, China, and Europe. Students from India and China were getting F1 visas for 6 months. Working people from India and China were getting H1 visas for 3 months only.

### **Getting your appointment:**

Here is a website for the consulate <http://www.usembassy-mexico.gov/tijuana/Teniv.htm>

**Here is a website for making the appointment** <https://www.nvars.com/use/>

**Fee:** You need to pay a fee in order to apply for the visa, there is a bank just half a block from the consulate, so you can pay the fee once you get to the consulate, just before your appointment.

Try to get your appointment later than 10 AM, so you can travel the same day. I had my appointment at 11 AM. I took an early flight from San Jose and I arrived at San Diego at 8:30 AM, I was at the Consulate ~ 10 AM, I was done ~ 4 PM, and I immediately headed back. Remember that crossing back to the US will take longer, due to immigration. By 7:00 PM, I was back at the airport and my flight was leaving at 8:30 PM, So I was able to do the whole thing in one day only.

### **How to enter Mexico:**

Depending on your country of origin, you may need a visa to enter Mexico, you can obtain this visa at the Mexican Consulate at San Francisco. This visa is easy to get, it usually takes 1-2 days. For more information, contact the consulate.

Phone: 415-354-1700

Fax: 415-435-3971

### **Getting there:**

I believe this is the closest American Consulate to the Bay Area. Getting there is quite easy. If you are traveling by yourself, then the cheapest and fastest way to go is to buy a Southwest flight from San Jose or Oakland to San Diego. The website for Southwest is: at <http://www.southwest.com/>

Once you arrive to San Diego airport, look for the little “information booth” that they have at the airport, and let them know that you are going to Tijuana, they will tell you how to get there. They have the directions already printed on a small piece of paper. On November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2003, I was given the following information:

### Directions to Tijuana from the San Diego International Airport

1. Take bus #992, "The Airport Flyer," just outside the door.
    - Fare \$2.25 exact change
    - Ask for a transfer.
  2. Get off the bus at **Broadway & Kettner.**
  3. Cross the street to the **American Plaza Transit Center.**
  4. Board a Blue Line Trolley in the direction of San Ysidro.
    - You will need to add 25¢ to your bus transfer. The fare from American Plaza to San Ysidro is \$2.50.
  5. San Ysidro is the last trolley stop on the blue line (about a 45 minute ride).
  6. Walk across the border.
- OR**
7. Exit the trolley at **Beyer Blvd.** - one stop before the border -. Take the Transportes el Volante shuttle to downtown Tijuana bus terminal - \$1.75

Mainly, you need to go from the airport to San Diego downtown by bus. Then, from downtown you will take a Trolley that will take you to San Ysidro, San Ysidro is the last station of the Trolley and it is next to the border with Mexico. You need to get off at San Ysidro and then you will cross the border walking, this is a short distance. Once you cross the border, you will see a lot of Mexican taxis; the taxi should charge no more than \$10 USD for the ride to the Consulate. You should get back to the airport following the same route. Good Luck!